

City of Takoma Park

THE MONTGOMERY COLLEGE NEIGHBORS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

May 3, 2007

The City of Takoma Park Montgomery College Neighbors Advisory Committee met on Thursday, May 3, 2007 in the Hydrangea Room of the Community Center, 7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park, Maryland.

Members Present: Arlene Markowicz, Morelyn Weisman, Kathy Jentz, Sally Brucker, Frances Phipps

Members Absent: Bernard Aronson

Staff Present: Ilona Blanchard, Senior Planner

Others Present: Joy Austin-Lane, Council Member, Brad Stewart (Montgomery College), David Capp (Montgomery College), Glenn Kreger (MNCPPC), John Hannon, Gregg Blackley, Amy Turim, Mark Freedman, James Evans

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:37 PM

2. Elect Interim Chairperson

Sally Brucker nominated Frances Phipps to serve as Interim Chairperson, and was seconded by Morelyn Weisman.

3. Review and Adopt Minutes

a. January 30, 2007 Minutes

Ilona Blanchard noted that Lorraine Pearsall had found factual errors in item three. David Capp requested that the campus name noted be changed Germantown. A motion was made to approve them subject to later amendment. Motion was seconded and the minutes were passed.

4. Draft resolution Supporting College Funding Request

Frances Phipps introduced the revised resolution.

Brad Stewart commented that Montgomery College is guardedly optimistic that funding will come through that had been cut out of the budget.

Motion: Sally Brucker made motion to pass the resolution as is. Kathy Jentz seconded the motion.

Discussion: Brad Stewart would prefer that even if the resolution encouraged funding that it not be introduced into negotiations at this late stage. Discussion of the purpose of the resolution. Frances Phipps offered to provide a committee endorse resolution to the Council with the request that it be transmitted in a manner designed to support the College funding request and not interfere with delicate negotiations.

Action Taken: Motion passed, Francis Phipps, Arlene Markowicz, Kathy Jentz, and Sally Brucker in favor and Morelyn opposed.

5. Briefing on Mandatory Referral Process

Glenn Kreger, the MNCPPC Team Leader for the Silver Spring/Takoma Park Community-Based Planning Team of the Montgomery County Planning Board reviewed the Mandatory referral process. Mandatory referral is required for agency or public projects including local, County, State and Federal.

Glenn Kreger provided as an example of the process the submittal guidelines and the submittal for the Montgomery College Cultural Arts Center.

The referral application is required for a change in use, acquisition or disposition of property. Repairs do not require mandatory referral. MNCPPC staff reviews by ordinances and the Master Plan. This process is a reactive process to the agency application. Agencies often come in for multiple pre-application meetings. When an application is received MNCPPC mails notices to civic groups in vicinity of project that an application has been filed.

Some minor applications do not go to the planning board and are approved administratively. Parcels that the planning board has interest in will often go to the board; Montgomery College has been to the board at least ten times.

Most application follow the same format as the example provided previously. In many referrals MNCPPC has to make certain findings such as the consistency with the Master Plan, adequate zoning, safety, efficiency, and compliance with environmental regulations.

Kreger stressed that the mandatory referral is advisory only and cannot be litigated as the decision is not mandatory. When a project affects MNCPPC land, then comments and conditions are not advisory.

Question: As the process is advisory, what are the consequences of choosing to disregard advice?

Answer: Usually there is give and take negotiation. When an agency decides not to comply with any or few comments, MNCPPC may choose not to sign off on permits. However, a building may start construction without MNCPPC signature on the plans.

Question: Is there a process or something that we can participate in?

Answer: Yes, community comments are appreciated from the City, committees and individuals preferably before staff writes its report.

Question: I often see signs on projects, is there a staff person assigned to each one?

Answer: We have a website that lists projects in the Takoma Park area and in Silver Spring.
www.mc-mncppc.org/silverspring
www.mc-mncppc.org/takomapark

Usually depending upon the project there will be one person in charge. Different staff personnel will handle each projects depending upon its type.

Question: What is the next project?

Answer: The next project will be the parking garage. A pre-application meeting has been held but no plans or other documentation have been submitted.

Question: How does Montgomery College weigh MNCPPC comments?

Answer: As advisory in nature.

Question: What about the Master Plan update?

Answer: The Master Plan was updated last 2000. The sector plan update is upcoming.

Question: Montgomery College Master plan was updated in 2002, the college has just collected data, and the plan will probably be updated in 2008.

Answer: HTI and the City blessed the last Master Plan, the college expects to work to get the plan approved again.

Discussion of interest of committee in the expansion on East and West campus as well as enrollment pressures.

Question: Please clarify zones for the commercial business district

Answer: The Central Business District in Silver Spring, are clustered around metro stations with a tent like effect in building height (tall at the metro shorter and shorter as you move away from the metro). The adjoining the CBD are residential neighborhoods. Takoma Park's zoning is R-60 which means that land is zoned for single family homes on 6,000 SF lots. Generally, the only private businesses allowed are daycare facilities in this zone. In the Mandatory referral process for public entities, the Planning Board would look at typical setbacks, heights, etc. that are within the R-60 Zone.

Glenn Kreger may be reached at (301) 495-4653.

6. Administrative Items

Discussion regarding developing a work plan for the committee: With all that has happened, we would like to get everyone on board prior to settling a work plan. New members should be added prior to the next meeting. While some committee members are new, it will be important for everyone to get up to speed prior to developing a work plan.

6. Meeting Dates

The next meeting will at 6:45 PM on Wednesday, June 30th (location TBA).

7. Adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned at 8 PM.

Respectfully Submitted

Approved

Ilona Blanchard, Senior Planner

Francis Phipps, Chair